

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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**Lighting, Cameras, New Security Contractor at Sursum Corda
Complex to Settle Attorney General's Lawsuit**
Case Accused Managers of Maintaining Drug Nuisance for Decade

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today that the Sursum Corda Cooperative Association and its property management company have installed new lighting and security cameras and hired a new security contractor to settle a lawsuit by the Office of Attorney General (OAG). The suit charged that the association and its management firm, Kettler Management, Inc., have maintained a drug nuisance over the past decade.

“This settlement caps a year of hard work from OAG’s Neighborhood and Victim Services staff in conjunction with concerned residents of Sursum Corda and the Metropolitan Police Department,” Attorney General Racine said. **“This outcome will ensure that Sursum Corda is a better place to live and that the District is a safer city.”**

Sursum Corda is a 199-unit housing development bounded by North Capitol Street NW, 1st Street NW, L Street NW and M Street NW. In March 2014, The Metropolitan Police Department’s (MPD) First District Vice Unit conducted a major narcotics investigation in the area, *Operation Broken Heart*. The investigation included 15 search warrants and resulted in 12 indictments for street-level drug traffickers for distribution, multiple arrests related to possession of illegal firearms, and the seizure of more than \$5,000 worth of crack cocaine.

Assistant Attorney General Rashee Raj Kumar and OAG Ruff Fellow O. Stacy Jeremiah then collected information from current and former officers in MPD’s First District. They concluded that the Sursum Corda neighborhood had degraded into center of general lawlessness over the last decade. Officers said the neighborhood had become an open-air drug market, a violent arena for gangs and crews and a perpetual crime hotspot for MPD.

Violent crime and constant narcotics activity led to MPD making hundreds of arrests and executing some 60 search warrants over the last decade in the Sursum Corda complex.

On the basis of historical crime statistics, police calls for service, search warrants and anecdotal evidence from MPD, OAG filed suit in August 2014. Both the Cooperative Association and Kettler Management manager immediately agreed to discuss how to improve the public safety of the neighborhood, saying they had the same concerns and sought to improve the quality of life for their residents. Last month, parties reached a settlement agreement, which included:

- **Lights:** Installation of 98 new or improved lights, most of these being 400-watt capacity;
- **Cameras:** Installation of new security cameras with remote-access capability for MPD; and
- **Security:** Hiring a new security company that will partner with MPD, the U.S. Attorney's Office and OAG to address the issues of the past and attempt to avoid them in the future.

"We are optimistic that this resolution will bring positive public safety changes to the Sursum Corda neighborhood while helping to maintain affordable housing in the District," Attorney General Racine said. **"I applaud MPD and the defendants for working with our office to make these vital changes."**

"The Sursum Corda case was a great collaborative effort – not just MPD and OAG, but the community and the residents. We want the residents and community members to feel safe and have a voice. This is going to improve the quality of life for the residents there going forward," said MPD Assistant Chief Diane Groomes.

The Sursum Corda Cooperative Association has already noticed a decrease in violent crime and narcotics offenses. The Nuisance Property Task Force (a joint effort between OAG and MPD) and Sursum Corda Cooperative Association are currently working together to maintain the improvements in public safety and plan to foster the partnership for the future.

"The nuisance property task force works. This is a great example of that. We want other community members and residents of the District who have these types of issues or who feel unsafe to come to us and to reach out to the task force," said Assistant Chief Groomes.

The Attorney General praised the hard work of Assistant Attorney General Kumar for her handling of this extraordinary case. He also recognized MPD Officers Michael Fanone, Jeffrey Leslie, Daniel Kelly, Randy Done, Samuel Modlin, as well as Lieutenants Duncan Bedlion, Brian Murphy, Jeffrey Parker, Commander Jeff Brown and Assistant Chief Groomes as being instrumental in the success of this case.